Nightmare Fuel Reflected

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/63007906.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Epithet Erased (Cartoon)
Relationship:	Sylvester "Sylvie" Ashling & Molly Blyndeff & Giovanni Potage
Characters:	Sylvester "Sylvie" Ashling, Molly Blyndeff, Giovanni Potage
Additional Tags:	Angst, Anxiety Attacks, Panic Attacks, just covering my bases here, Friendship, Found Family, Male-Female Friendship, Sibling Relationship, Angst and Hurt/Comfort, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Hurt/Comfort, I am trying my diddly-darn best to tag this properly, But as some of you know, I hate doing tags, Hugs, okay i think that's it
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-02-12 Words: 1,971 Chapters: 1/1

Nightmare Fuel Reflected

by SophiesWundergarten

Summary

This fic is based on the *wonderful* art of yes-asil on Tumblr!! Please go shower that artist in all the love because I simply adore the two comics that this story came from and they have lived rent-free in my brain for years.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Molly, Sylvie, and Giovanni walked up to the entrance of a rather spooky looking alleyway.

“Boss, are you sure about this?” Molly asked, rubbing her arms as a chilly breeze blew past, whistling around the corners of the bricks and making an eerie noise.

“Yeah, this doesn’t look very safe,” Sylvie looked about uncertainly, “Maybe we *shouldn’t* go into the creepy alley where we’re likely to get mugged?”

Giovanni laughed raucously, the sound echoing and bouncing from wall to wall. “Come on, minions! Right through here is a great loitering spot, it’s just a shortcut.”

“Right.” Sylvie said dubiously. “A ‘shortcut’.”

Giovanni groaned. “It’ll be *fine*, Dr. Buzzkill. C’mon. The sooner we get started the sooner we get there!” He confidently began marching into the web of shadows cast by the various buildings and fences that made up the alleyway.

Molly nervously followed him, with Sylvie taking up the rear. Soon, the trio made it to the other side.

“See?” Giovanni grinned triumphantly, about to take the last step that would lead himself out into the last glimmers of late evening sun. “There was nothing to worry abou–”

“Aha!” Someone shouted, and suddenly the three were looking up at a group of young adults who were standing atop a squat building ahead of them.

“Give us your wallets!”

Molly automatically backed up, hiding behind Giovanni slightly. She looked anxiously at the two older boys.

Giovanni, sensing her trepidation, pulled out his bat and widened his stance. “What do you want?” He sneered.

“Your wallets.” The leader of the group rolled his eyes. “I just said that. What are you, stupid?”

“No!” Sylvie immediately bristled. “You’re the stupid ones for taking on a highly trained Epithet user!” Right as he drew breath to call for Counting Sheep, the leader laughed.

He motioned for his fellows to back off, looking smug. “Let’s see what you’ve got, *kid*. Give me your best shot.” He held his arms out, inviting it.

Sylvie, very riled up indeed now, glanced at Molly. They would pay for scaring her. And they would pay for insulting him.

Already reaching for his trump card, Sylvie hesitated. He has seen what Nightmare Fuel did to Molly at the museum, and it had made him rethink how often he was using it. As a

psychologist, it was his responsibility to help heal mental trauma, not cause it.

“Oh, what? Scared?” The leader simpered, pulling out a knife and beginning to toss it up and down. He reared back, about to throw it, and Sylvie made his decision.

“Nightmare Fuel!”

Immediately, his combatant dropped the knife. Flinging out his arm, he yelled, “Reflect!” Initially, nothing happened. He smiled. “Let’s see what *your* nightmares are made of!”

Molly felt Sylvie stiffen beside her, and she gasped. Turning to her friend, she saw him hunched over, hand clutching at his heart.

She grabbed his shoulder, trying very hard to stay calm. It wasn’t working. “What is it? *Sylvie!* What are you scared of? Can we fight it off? You need to tell us!”

Stumbling backwards, Sylvie collapsed onto the dirty concrete.

Molly knelt next to him, shaking his arm. She felt tears dripping down her face, could see them falling onto the wool of his hoodie. “*Sylvie!* Say something! Please! You need to breathe! Sylvie!” But the teenager’s breaths remained frighteningly shallow.

Behind her, the leader, apparently Inscribed, muttered, “Did we just kill the kid?”

His companions looked panicked. “Uh… Maybe?”

Giovanni clenched his hands around the grip of his Soul Slugger Doom Bat, rage seething in him like a pot mere seconds away from boiling over. “*I* will kill all of *you!*” He raced off, vaulting the fence separating him from their attackers with such ferocity that they seemed taken aback.

Meanwhile, Molly wrapped her hands around Sylvie’s head, murmuring tearfully, “Please let it work… Please let it work…” as she attempted to Dumb Down whatever this terrifying effect was.

She didn’t understand. This *wasn’t* Nightmare Fuel; that was a tangible, physical manifestation of a specific fear. But she couldn’t see this. Giovanni couldn’t hit it or subdue it with violence, and she couldn’t outsmart it.

There was nothing to do but wait and hope desperately that Hushabye or *something* would allow her to help.

It took an excruciatingly slow length of time, but slowly, slowly, Sylvie’s rigidly tense muscles began to relax. At long last, he took a deep, shuddering breath, letting it all out in a rush.

“...Sylvie?” Molly asked in a hushed voice.

He winced, taking in another shaky breath, and weakly opened his eyes. “Molly?”

A thousand words came to her mind; questions and reassurances and threats toward the bullies that had done this. But as she watched him try and sit up, she sealed it all up inside. That wasn't what Sylvie needed right now.

Silently, she helped him fold himself into a somewhat seated position, careful not to touch him more than necessary. Goodness knows whenever she felt this bad she didn't want physical contact unless she invited it. Belatedly, she regretted grabbing onto him and shaking him out of pure panic. That probably hadn't helped.

They sat there, quietly, inches apart, for a while. Her thoughts were still spinning, unsure of what to do next.

She glanced at her friend out of the corner of her eye. He looked exhausted. Eyes fluttering between open and shut, shoulders slumped, hands curled limply on his knees.

Eventually, he spoke, voice still ragged. "I'm scared of bonding with people, who will inevitably leave me for one reason or another. I'm scared of people staying, only for me to disappoint them, to be inadequate, and become so attached to them that it leaves me vulnerable when they go." His eyes were closed. Maybe it was easier to say when he didn't have to face her response. "The response was a panic attack so intense my body and mind were left paralyzed."

Molly sucked in a breath. "You really scared me. You looked like you were dying." She shivered, still trying to banish that thought.

Sylvie looked down. "Might have come close to a heart attack after all. I'm sorry you had to step in, you shouldn't have had to deal–"

"You're so smart, but so *stupid!*" She burst out, scrubbing at her eyes as fresh tears came. "How could I not have dealed? I care so much about you! I thought I was going to lose you, you big *doofus*. I thought… I thought I'm going to lose another…" She trailed off into a wet hiccough.

Guilt stabbed him in the gut. He reached out, pulling her into a tight hug. "You're right. I'm a big overthinking doofus. Thank you, Molly."

She sniffled. "I hope Boss beats them to a pulp."

Sylvie said nothing.

"I hope he comes back soon." Sighing, she began to relax a little. Giovanni would be back for them, and he'd know just what to do and everything would be alright. Hopefully. "You think he's okay? Sylvie?" Molly recognised the feeling of dead weight in her arms, and she carefully shifted the passed out teenager so he was laying with his head in her lap.

When he began twitching, groaning in his sleep and whimpering, it scared her at first. She whispered his name, gently tugging on his sleeve in an attempt to wake him up.

When that only seemed to make things worse, with Sylvie's breathing picking up and a worried pinch coming over his face, she decided to try and Dumb Down whatever nightmares he was having.

It felt like ages that she sat there, friend in her lap, making soothing sounds and lulling his fears as much as she could. A steady pattern of footsteps slowly broke through her sleepy thoughts, running up to them.

"Bear Trap? Are you sleeping?" Giovanni's hushed voice entered her mind, soft and gentle.

"Gio? Are you–"

"Yep." He grinned tiredly.

"And–"

He nodded. "They're taken care of. Won't even remember what hit them. Are *you* guys okay?" His face fell as he looked down at Sylvie, still asleep, though seemingly more peacefully than before.

Molly let all her remaining anxieties out in a whoosh of air. "*Now* we are."

Giovanni moved to take Sylvie from her, expression contorted with concern. "Let me check, yeah?" He gave the younger boy a lookover, trying to ascertain whether he'd been injured in a physical manner. To his chagrin, he knew that Sylvie would be much better at assessing mental wounds, though he would probably need to find someone else to talk to about it. "You did good, Molly. Sylv and I, we really owe you."

"You *don't*." Molly bit out, trying to suppress the tears that had come back with a vengeance and now threatened to overwhelm her. "I… I'm glad you two are okay."

"We need a big talk after this." Giovanni sighed. He had gathered that there was nothing wrong with Sylvie's body, and, as frustrating as it was, the threat had already been vanquished. There was nothing left to do but go home and hope he was feeling better when he woke up. "Wish I could have beat those guys *harder*, if I ever– Sylvester!"

Giovanni had been tenderly wiping the remaining tears from under Sylvie's glasses when the younger boy had reached up, catching his wrist in a hand.

"Don't… I need those…" He mumbled.

"Ah. Sorry, bud." Giovanni pulled his hand back, readjusting on one knee to give him space. "Can you stand up?"

"I… don't think so." It would normally hurt him to admit such a thing, but in his present state the words slipped off his tongue with barely a struggle.

Giovanni shrugged. "Take it easy, I'll carry you." He prepared to scoop Sylvie up.

"I'm not a *toddler*." He groused.

“I know. But you’re *hurt*. Let me help. Let me help for my sake.” The older teen smiled to himself, grateful he had a few tricks up his sleeves from Percy to make it easier for Sylvie to accept help. “Let’s get you two to bed, alright?”

Molly yawned, rubbing her eyes. “Okay.”

“One minute longer and you’d have fallen asleep on the sidewalk. You up for walking, Beat Trap?”

“‘Course.”

“Good.” He was still a little worried about her, but right now Sylvie took priority. Molly carried far too much on her shoulders, and this was bound to only make things worse. “Can’t carry two sleepyheads. Hope Mom doesn’t think I kidnapped you again. When we get home, I’ll make some soup to warm up, sound good?”

“Home sounds perfect.” Molly wasn’t really processing what was being said, but she picked up on the bits about “home” and “soup”, which meant she wouldn’t have to go back to the toy shop tonight, and Sylvie wouldn’t be left alone in his apartment, and that was all she cared about right now.

“Yeah? Cool.” Giovanni glanced at her before quickly training his eyes back on the ground in front of him. It wouldn’t do to trip and drop his precious cargo. But Molly seemed alright for the moment, and he could reassess when they got to his house. Now, what she needed was a distraction

“I’ll tell you guys then all about how those guys ran, they were screaming like… like…” His sentence petered off, overtired mind reaching for a simile and finding nothing.

“Headless chickens?” Molly offered.

“Bear Trap! Nice analogy!” He squeezed her hand where she had slipped it into his, underneath Sylvie’s legs.

The aforementioned teenager rolled his eyes wearily, but a fond smile was growing on his lips. “Wow, your vocabulary keeps growing.”

Giovanni snorted. “Very funny, four-eyes. We don’t want me dropping you because I laughed my soul out.”

“You would never, Boss.” Molly reminded him.

“Okay, you’re right.”

End Notes

Once again, I am *beseeching* you to go check out yes-asil on Tumblr, and all of the art collected on that blog, as well as their other blogs. Thank you <3

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!